

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-08 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 /091 W

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R 151705Z JUL 76

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3703

INFO AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UK, UG, AO

SUBJ: CONSERVATIVES ATTACK HMG AFRICAN POLICY: ANGOLA

AND UGANDA

REF: LONDON 10968

1. FOLLOWING TWO SEPARATE GOVERNMENT STATEMENTS IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS JULY 12 ON EVENTS IN ANGOLA AND UGANDA, CONSERVATIVE SHADOW SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS REGINALD MAUDLING LED AN ATTACK (OF SORTS) ON THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO EXECUTION OF BRITISH CITIZENS IN ANGOLA AND THE PRESUMED DEATH IN UGANDA UNDER SUSPICIOUS CIRCUMSTANCES OF MRS. BLOCK.

2. MAUDLING HAD, FOR THE CONSERVATIVES, LITTLE NEW TO OFFER. ON THE EXECUTIONS HE REPEATED HIS PHRASES OF "JUDICIAL MURDER"; ON UGANDA HE ASKED THE GOVERNMENT WHAT STEPS IT PROPOSED TO TAKE TO BRING THOSE RESPONSIBLE TO

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JUSTICE.

3. ALL OF THIS WAS ANTICIPATABLE. WHAT WAS NOT WAS THE EAGERNESS OF MPS FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE HOUSE TO GET INTO THE ACT ON BOTH QUESTIONS. CONSERVATIVE MP HUGH FRASER SAID THE FCO WAS THE WEAKEST BRITAIN HAD EVER KNOWN AS DEMONSTRATED IN UGANDA. LABOR MP JANNER ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST IN THE RETURN TO BRITAIN OF MRS. BLOCK'S BODY IF FOUND. CONSERVATIVE MP GEOFFREY FINSBERG STRONGLY SUGGESTED THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ADVISE ALL BRITISH CITIZENS REMAINING IN UGANDA TO DEPART SO THAT THEY WOULD NOT BE USED BY UGANDA AS POLITICAL HOSTAGES.

4. ON ANGOLA, UUUC MP ENOCH POWELL DEPLORED THE READINESS OF THE GOVERNMENT TO INVOLVE THE SOVEREIGN IN A CLEMENCY APPEAL WHICH WAS KNOWN TO BE USELESS. MAUDLING CALLED UPON THE GOVERNMENT TO TAKE ACTION ON BEHALF OF THE REMAINING PRISONERS. CONSERVATIVE MP JULIAN AMERY SAID THE ANGOLAN TRIAL HAD BEEN MASTERMINDED IN MOSCOW AND CUBA, AND CONSERVATIVE MP CHARLES MORRISON SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE FAMILIES OF THE EXECUTED "EXCEPTIONAL FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE" IN RETURNING THE BODIES (ROWLANDS SAID THIS WAS IMPOSSIBLE.)

5. FINALLY, LABOR MP ERIC OGDEN TRIED TO SUSPEND THE HOUSE UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 9 FOR A SPECIAL DEBATE, A REQUEST NOT ALLOWED BY THE SPEAKER.

6. COMMENT: MPS ATTENDING THE HOUSE FOR THE GOVERNMENT'S TWO AFRICAN STATEMENTS WERE REFLECTING WIDESPREAD POPULAR DISMAY, CONCERN AND FRUSTRATION ABOUT EVENTS IN AFRICA AND, IN SOME CASES, WERE REPRESENTING INTERESTS OF THEIR INDIVIDUAL CONSTITUENCIES. WEEKEND PRESS REPORTS THAT HMG HAD SENT A MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCE TO FAMILY MEMBERS OF UGANDAN SOLDIERS KILLED IN THE ISRAELI RAID HAD ATTRACTED STRONG CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT, REINFORCING

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THE SUSPICION THAT HMG WAS BEING SOFTER ON AMIN AND LESS EFFUSIVE IN PRAISE OF THE ISRAELI SUCCESS THAN IT NEEDED TO BE. ROWLANDS' STATEMENTS APPEARED TO BE AIMED PARTICULARLY AT THOSE THEMES.

7. A CONSERVATIVE SPOKESMAN ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS (CHRISTOPHER TUGENDHAT) TOLD EMBOFF AFTER THE DEBATE THAT, IN HIS VIEW, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOT HAVE INVOLVED THE QUEEN IN A CLEMENCY PLEA WHEN THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THAT SUCH A PLEA WAS GUARANTEED TO SUCCEED. HE SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT RAN THE RISK OF DAMAGING THE QUEEN'S STATURE AS HEAD OF STATE BY DRAWING HER IN ON A PROJECT OF DUBIOUS SUCCESS.

8. ON UGANDA, TUGENDHAT SAID THE GOVERNMENT WAS GUILTY OF A TACTICAL ERROR IN TRYING TO PLAY THE ACTIONS SEPARATELY.

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TELY IN UGANDA AND IN ISRAEL. NO BRITISH GOVERNMENT, HE SAID, EITHER LABOR OR TORY, WOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MATCH PRESIDENT FORD'S PRAISE OF THE ISRAELI RAID. AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD HAVE EXPECTED THAT ITS MESSEGES OF CONDOLENCE TO UGANDA WOULD NOT FOR LONG REMAIN SECRET AND THEY SHOULD HAVE MADE A BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT OF THESE CONDOLENCES TO UGANDA AND ISRAEL AT THE TIME TO DIFFUSE ANY BUILD-UP OF POPULAR CRITICISM WHICH THE PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE HAD REFLECTED.

9. FINALLY, TUGENDHAT SAID THAT A CONSERVATIVE GOVERN-

MENT COULD NOT HAVE ACTED APPRECIABLY DIFFERENTLY, GIVEN
THE IMPOTENCE OF THE UK TO ACT MORE VIGOROUSLY.
TUGENDHAT SAID HE DOUBTED CROSLAND WAS AT ALL INVOLVED
PERSONALLY IN THE DECISION TO SEND CONDOLENCE MESSAGES;
IF HE HAD BEEN, THE DECISION WOULD PROBABLY HAVE NOT
BEEN DIFFERENT. A CONSERVATIVE FOREIGN SECRETARY, TUGEND-
HAT SUGGESTED HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE OPENLY DISCLOSED THEIR
CONTACTS WITH AMIN TO AVOID PUBLIC CRITICISM LARGELY
FUELED BY PRESS LEAKS.

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